

**University of Maine System
Native American Waiver and Educational Program
Guidance for Administrators
Effective Fall 2012
(Updated 3/16/15)**

The University of Maine System has a tuition waiver and room and board grant programs for qualified and eligible Native American students. The purpose of these programs is to encourage Native American students to participate in public higher education in Maine. The goal is to provide sustained support for all UMS Native American students who wish to pursue post-secondary study and, in particular, those who wish to obtain a certificate and/or an associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree or some other appropriate credential that will serve them personally and professionally as they plan for the future.

Native American Waiver Program

This program covers tuition and mandatory fees (required fees charged of all students enrolled at the institution and automatically assessed at the time of registration exclusive of fees associated with contracted training or other educational activities provided by an external agency, business or organization including but not limited to travel and accommodation fees related to travel courses and other extraordinary fees such as health insurance). Tuition and mandatory fees will be waived for qualified students, both matriculated and non-matriculated, who are enrolled in academic, credit-bearing courses at the undergraduate, graduate, or continuing education level at the campuses of the University of Maine System.

Eligibility:

- A student must be a member and be included on the current tribal census of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet, or the Aroostook Band of Micmac, or have at least one parent or grandparent who is included on the current tribal census of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet, or the Aroostook Band of Micmac. **OR:**
- A student must be a member and be included on the current tribal census of a Canadian Wabanaki Tribe or have at least one parent or grandparent who is included on the current tribal census, and must have lived in Maine for at least twelve months, for purposes other than education, immediately prior to application. **OR:**
- A student must be a member and be included on a current tribal census of a federally, state or provincially recognized Native American Tribe and have lived in Maine for at least twelve months, for purposes other than education, immediately prior to application.
- Proof of residency is required for all applicants with the exception of current tribal members and their direct biological descendants (e.g., parent or grandparent was a tribal member) of the

Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet, or the Aroostook Band of Micmac. The residency guidelines are the same as those employed for any student and can be located within the UMS Administrative Practice Letter found at: http://www.maine.edu/pdf/IV-G_002.pdf.

- Matriculating students must apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and supply all required documentation to the Financial Aid Office at the campus on which they are matriculated. For the academic year and/or the fall semester, the FAFSA must be filed and the aid application completed by September 1st. For the spring semester, the FAFSA must be filed and the aid application completed by January 1st. It is understood that a student's particular situation (family emergency as an example) might necessitate more flexibility in these dates; the financial aid director (or, the campus coordinator for NAWEP in consultation with the financial aid director) have the ability to alter these dates as needed. New students in particular may need more time to complete this requirement and every effort should be made to provide the needed flexibility.

All students must remain eligible to register for classes and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined by federal guidelines. Degree seeking students will be evaluated based on the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy of the campus where they are matriculating. Students who are not matriculating at any campus of the University of Maine System will be evaluated using the University of Maine Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. The policy can be found at: <http://umaine.edu/stuaid/sap/>

Waiver: Program Specifics

Eligibility Verification: Eligibility is verified by the UMS Native American Program Coordinator.

Residency: As mentioned in the eligibility criteria listed above, proof of residency is required for all applicants with the exception of current tribal members and their direct biological descendants (e.g., parent or grandparent was a tribal member) of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet, or the Aroostook Band of Micmac. The residency guidelines are the same as those employed for any student and can be located within the UMS Administrative Practice Letter found at: http://www.maine.edu/pdf/IV-G_002.pdf.

Tuition charged: The waiver will be charged at the in-state rate for all students, new and continuing, as of 2012-2013. Students who were certified for the waiver prior to 2012 who were classified as out-of-state will be reclassified to in-state.

Mandatory Fees:

Mandatory Fees: Mandatory fees are those fees which all students must pay including any course or program fees as determined by the campus. For the purpose of the waiver, mandatory program fees are covered for eligible Native students with the following exceptions:

- Any fees which could be construed as books or supplies are NOT covered by the waiver.

- Fees associated with contracted training or other educational activities provided by an external agency, business or organization including but not limited to: travel expenses for airfare, hotel and meals for a course requiring travel or the cost of flight instructors, and expenses related to use of airplanes or other training equipment in an Aviation Course are NOT covered by the waiver. Such fees are considered Extraordinary Fees and are explicitly excluded from this definition of mandatory fees. For the purposes of any tuition or course fee waiver provided by the University including employee and Native American Student waivers, such Extraordinary Fees are NOT covered by the waiver.
- Fees associated with student health insurance are NOT covered by the waiver. The UMS has a mandatory requirement for students to carry health insurance but students can waive the university plan and so are not required to take this plan if they have other coverage. However, students who are covered by the Indian Health Service (IHS) can waive the student health insurance by simply going into the insurance waiver website and indicating “Indian Health Service” on the line indicating coverage.

Grandfathering of students who were certified for the waiver prior to Fall 2012: Students who entered the program prior to Fall 2012 would have their eligibility grandfathered for the receipt of the waiver portion of the benefit until graduation from their current degree program or through academic year 2017-2018, whichever occurs first. If they subsequently apply for an additional degree (either at the completion of their current degree or after 2017-2018), the new eligibility requirements will be in effect. Grandfathered students are expected to meet all other new requirements (SAP, etc) of the Program.

Program Agreement: All students receiving the waiver and/or grant will be expected to sign a new program agreement.

Repeat coursework: The waiver is not tied to federal eligibility (with the exception of satisfactory academic progress) and so repeat coursework is permitted but should be monitored as this can impact satisfactory academic progress.

Eligibility for degrees: With the exception of students certified for the waiver before September 2012, students receiving the Native American Waiver and the Room and Board Grant are only permitted to receive same for one degree at each level: certificate, associate degree, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, and doctoral degree. Students who were certified before September 2012 may be currently working on a second degree at the same level – they are grandfathered for this as specified elsewhere in this document.

In rare circumstances and with the approval of the UMS Chief Student Affairs Officer, a student may be granted an exception when the receipt of an additional degree at a given level is necessary for workplace advancement or retraining (examples include certain post-baccalaureate degrees at UMA, certification programs at UMPI and other appropriate certificates at other campuses). It is important to note that when such an exception is granted, the student would only be eligible for the waiver. Eligibility

for the room and board grant would end with the receipt of the original degree (so, one bachelors, one masters, and so on).

So, if a student is enrolling in a certificate program after already receiving a bachelor's degree, assuming that the certificate program is for retraining/workforce development, the student would appeal to the Chief Student Affairs Officer (a letter describing the program and why enrolling) and that individual would approve it and notify all appropriate individuals. HOWEVER, the student would only be qualified for the waiver of tuition and fees and would not be eligible for the room and board grant. They are only eligible for the room and board grant for one of each level (associates, bachelors, masters and doctorate) - a certificate is really just a subset of a bachelor's degree (or in the case of certain education certification certificates, a master's degree) not a new degree per se.

Satisfactory Academic Progress - All students must remain eligible to register for classes and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined by federal guidelines. Degree seeking students will be evaluated based on the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy of the campus where they are matriculating. Students who are not matriculating at any campus of the University of Maine System will be evaluated using the University of Maine Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. The policy can be found at: <http://umaine.edu/stuaid/sap/>

As with current practice, the campus Financial Aid Office will conduct SAP review for all matriculated students receiving the waiver and/or grant. The Native American Waiver and Educational Program Coordinator will conduct the SAP review for all non-matriculated students receiving the waiver utilizing the University of Maine SAP policy.

Total amount of aid permitted: The total amount a student receives from the Native American Tuition Waiver Program and from all other sources of financial support for the same purpose, whether from the institution or from outside agencies, may not exceed the student's cost of attendance. The receipt of other aid may, in some rare cases, reduce or eliminate the receipt of the tuition waiver.

Native American Room and Board Grant

The Native American Room and Board Grant is a need based award for qualified native students living in a residence hall of the campus where they are matriculating. Students will be subsidized at the double occupancy rate for the student's residence. Charges for single, double single, or computer or telephone devices, for which there is a separate charge, will be the responsibility of the student tenant. Room and board charges will be covered only during the traditional academic year (fall and spring terms). On those campuses that have designated housing for seniors where the students can decline the board portion of the charge, the Native American Room and Board Grant will only be applied to the housing portion; the student will not receive any refund for board not delivered as a part of the normal board plan.

Eligibility

- Students must meet all eligibility requirements of the Native American Tuition Waiver Program and be certified as eligible by the Wabanaki Center at the University of Maine.

- Students must be matriculating in an undergraduate or graduate degree program within the University of Maine System, enrolled in a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours for undergraduates or nine (9) credit hours for graduate students at USM, or six (6) credits hours for graduate students at UM, and living in a residence hall of the campus where they are matriculating. Full time enrollment for graduate students working on their thesis or dissertation, and/or on a campus other than UM and USM, will be classified as full time in accordance with the policies on their campus of matriculation.
- Students must apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and supply all required documentation to the Financial Aid Office at the campus on which they are matriculated. For the academic year and/or the fall semester, the FAFSA must be filed and the aid application completed by September 1st. For the spring semester, the FAFSA must be filed and the aid application completed by January 1st. It is understood that a student's particular situation (family emergency as an example) might necessitate more flexibility in these dates; the financial aid director (or, the campus coordinator for NAWEP in consultation with the financial aid director) have the ability to alter these dates as needed. New students in particular may need more time to complete this requirement and every effort should be made to provide the needed flexibility.
- Students must meet all of the general eligibility requirements of the Federal Title IV Financial Aid programs, including Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements.
- Students who maintain a permanent private residence, other than the parent's home, within commuting distance of the university are NOT eligible for room and board grants.
- Persons employed by the University of Maine System on a half-time or greater basis and who are carried on the University employee payroll are NOT eligible for the room and board grant.

Grant Program Specifics:

Students who fall under this revision: The transition of the Native American Room and Board Scholarship to a need based grant will apply to all students, new and continuing, effective Fall 2012.

Enrollment in sessions outside the normal fall and spring semesters: Students enrolled in course work during short sessions outside the regular fall and spring semesters may be considered for a room and board grant while carrying fewer than the minimum credit hours specified above. The grant covers room and board charges only during that time period when the student is regularly enrolled and attending classes. These exceptions would only be granted if the student's major required attendance during these sessions.

Students in default: Students receiving the Native American Room and Board Grant must meet the federal financial aid eligibility requirements.

Reduction in credit hour requirement: Students who have documented disabilities, are working with the campus Office of Students with Disabilities, and are required to take a reduced course load due to this

(as a component of “reasonable accommodation’) are eligible for the room and board grant. There may be instances where a student, due to SAP, is put on a learning contract which may necessitate a reduction in credit hours – in these instances, the campus can, on a case by case basis, permit this.

Determination of room and board grant: The maximum eligibility for the Room and Board Grant will not exceed the cost of the standard room and board charges, less all federal and state gift aid the student may receive for the purpose of funding education expenses, as well as other assistance specifically identified as paying for room and board charges. For the purposes of this calculation, 50% of a Federal Pell Grant will be considered. During the award process the maximum eligibility is then compared to the students remaining need and reduced if necessary so that an over award situation is not created.

Total amount of aid permitted: The total amount a student receives from the Native American Room and Board Grant Program and from all other sources of financial support for the same purpose, whether from the institution or from outside agencies, may not exceed the student’s calculated financial need. The receipt of other aid may, in some cases, reduce or eliminate the receipt of the room and board grant.

Exceptions: Exceptions to any policies associated with the Native American Waiver and Educational Program will only be granted by the Native American Waiver and Educational Program Coordinator in consultation with the UMS Chief Student Affairs Officer. Appeals should be presented in the form of a letter detailing the specifics of the appeal.

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